

Species of the Month 08/2017 || Weaver Ant

11 September 2017 || TO NUS Community

NUS Students Against Violation of the Earth (SAVE) and the Office of Environmental Sustainability present “Campus in a Tropical Rainforest”, an initiative that aims to create awareness of the biodiversity that surrounds us in NUS. In each monthly issue, we will be featuring a species that can be spotted or found in NUS to help us get to know them better. So, if you happen to be travelling around campus between classes, remember to stop and look around your surroundings, for you may be surprised to come across some of the other inhabitants of NUS.

NUS SAVE Presents:

CAMPUS in a TROPICAL RAINFOREST

Species of the Month
Issue #20: September 2017




Photo by: Photo by: Kenneth Lee

Weaver Ant
Species: *Oecophylla smaragdina*
Family: Formicidae

Appearance

- The worker ants are mostly orange in colour.
- Some worker ants have a bright green bulbous hind portion (called the gaster).
- Each colony only has one queen, which can be identified by their greenish-brown colour.

Habitat

- Weaver ant nests are usually found in forest trees but are sometimes also found high up on roofs or telegraph poles.
- Colonies usually occupy several nests across adjacent trees, which can contain up to half a million ants.



Diet

Insectivorous; they commonly prey on small insects, but also consume honeydew - a sugar-rich sticky liquid excreted by certain insects, such as cicadas.



Fun Facts

- To form their unique ball-shaped nests, weaver ants sew leaves together, using the silk produced by larvae.
- Weaver ants are an aggressive species; if disturbed, they send a noisy warning by tapping on the leaves of their nests.
- Their bites can be very painful as they secrete formic acid from their abdomen into any wounds.
- As they prey on smaller insects which are often pests, weaver ants are sometimes used in agriculture as natural pest control.

Initiative by:



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Check out other sightings of NUS biodiversity on the Campus Creatures Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/campuscreatures/>

You can also join the community in spotting the flora and fauna in NUS by sharing your sightings with pictures on the Campus Creatures Facebook page and Instagram the photos with #NUSCiTR and #NUSbiodiversity.